

You Make Me Okay

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You Make Me Okay

by [Wire](#)

Summary

Will thinks about school. The noise. The way his skin crawls when theres a life speaking beside him. The messy kids, chasing him with paint on their hands and poking kittens with sticks. After a week or so of laying in bed with fire beneath his bones, he returns to school. But theres something different. Someone different. Someone that makes school a lot more easier.

Notes

This was inspired by a baby AU fanart that the amazingly talented eliosu on tumblr drew. Please do check her out!

(I deleted all my other fics so this would be the first one to a new start)

Enjoy.

Chapter 1

In the quiet morning, Will wakes up to his own screaming head, and tries hard to fall back asleep. He can feel how hot he is. His arms, and legs. All sweaty and burning. Cheeks flaming up against his flat pillow.

He has to go to school today. No more missing out. No more laying in bed with the children speaking into his ears. Their voices resting at the back of his head. The teachers, the closing books, the coloring. He can still hear it all. Screaming. Screaming. Then he gets hotter, and sicker, and sweatier. Poor boy. He only wants to sleep.

Drift.

Just rest and rest. But his father is at the door, and he's saying something muffled by the thick air between them. "You're awake?" He asks, leaning against the door frame, a blur to Will's opening eyes. "Come on then, get dressed." He taps the doorway and leaves without checking Will's temperature.

It's getting better. But it's still bad.

He gets himself up, lifts his elbows and pushes against the mattress to raise his body. His head is so hot. Heavy. It's spinning with fire and heat. The sun might as well be sitting in the very core of his brain.

He tries to manage it, tries to block it out, but his room smells like sickness and he can't undo that.

Once he gets his little feet onto the ground, he stands still for a while. Slightly swaying. Trying to get a grip on his stance as his head jumps and turns and dances. Making the room fade into one big cloud, corners mixing in with the walls.

"Have you gotten up?" His father calls out.

Yelling back will make him nauseous, so he doesn't reply.

Even as he stands, sleep almost ridding away from him, he still thinks about school. The noise. The way his skin crawls when there's a life speaking behind him. The messy kids, chasing him with paint on their hands and poking kittens with sticks.

He gets sicker. And hotter. And it's the idea of school that makes his head flame up.

One of your classmates probably got you sick. He recalls his father telling him on the way home. The teacher called worried about how Will looked. Green, and drowsy. How you could feel the heat off him.

Don't want to get the other kids sick.

You'll feel better tomorrow.

Funny, that. Its been a week. And he hasn't gone to the doctor. He cant step outside the house without collapsing onto the floor. Without throwing up all over the ground. His father listens to his commands about a doctor. *No, doctor. Please no.* And makes him tea. Stuffs him with wet towels. Puts him to bed early. Theres a book he reads that Will doesn't get tired of. About a velveteen rabbit. Old, and ripping apart.

Will shuffles into the cold bathroom, and thinks about sleeping on the tiled floor.

His backpack is weighing him down. Its not full at all. But his weak shoulders are struggling.

His father is walking beside him, taking him to class. He has one hand at the back of Wills head, playing with his hair, twirling it around his finger. His father sighs. "You feel any better?" He asks, patting down any clumped locks he had created.

Will was too focused, he tried hard not to trip over his feet, so when his father spoke up, not a single reaction was given.

"Will, I asked you a question." His father said, a calm stoic voice. "Do you feel any better?"

This time Will looked up. His hair had fallen over his eyes, and when his father gave him a questioning look, he nodded and continued to stare at his feet.

He took his fathers wrist, and held it tightly. "Did you feed Edward?" Will asked, leaning into his grip. His voice was so very small, and tired that his father chuckled and smiled, amused at the sleepy boy. With his feet tapping so furiously against the floor, because he wants to stay standing, and not tumble down. "Yes, I did. Like I do everyday, William."

"Okay."

His father can feel the heat of his palm against his skin. And when they finally reach Wills classroom, there are eyes. Immediately. Darting towards the two. Children speaking, and getting up to see. Will hides behind his father, he has his little hands clutched to his shirt. Holding on, and not planning to let go.

"I don't want to anymore. I don't."

The teacher walks up to them, and bends towards Will. Smile spreading across her face, trying to welcome him in.

"Hello, Will! Welcome back! I know it can be scary when you haven't been to school in a long time, but I promise you, you'll have fun just like before!"

That's the thing. Will never had fun.

"You know, you aren't the only one that's a little bit frightened. We have a new student. Do you think you'd be able to talk to him? After all, you are the ruler of this very classroom."

Will tries to look into the class, he tries to find the odd one out. Someone crying in a corner, or being poked at. But there's no one.

"It's just like before, Will." His father says, and tries to scoop him out from behind. A firm hand on his back, slowly urging him forward.

His eyes are still fixated onto the children. He wants to know who it is. Without being told, he wants to figure it out himself.

"Do you want me to get your backpack?" The kind teacher says, and sets a finger on one of his straps. He nods, almost unsurely, and wiggles out of its grip. The straps being released from his aching shoulders. It's a big relief, but he doesn't show it. He stretches out his right shoulder, but that's about it.

"You can go now Mr. Graham, I think we're okay. Aren't we, Will?"

He doesn't reply, but his father leaves anyway.

Will wonders if he'll throw up today, because his stomach is starting to burn, and he hasn't found the new student yet.

"Come on. Why don't you step in? There's new colors on the table that I'm sure you'll be happy about."

"The new.." He can't get it out, but it's loud enough to catch the teacher's attention.

"What was that?"

"The new student. Where- where is he?"

She smiles at his voice, and pats his hair down. "Over...there!" She extends her arm, and points to the drawing table. There are 5 kids sitting there. And he knows immediately who it is.

The others are loud, throwing colored pencils onto the floor. Stealing, messing up their own paper, as well as others. And in the corner of all that, with only three colors by his side. A quite lonesome boy hums to the sound of pencil against paper, and sets his colors down with such gentleness, that Will doesn't even think he's human.

"Are you gonna go draw with him?" The teacher smiles. "You should! It's always nice to make new friends."

This would be Will's first. So not new at all.

He steps towards the table, trying not to pay too much attention to the people around him. Calling his name, and beckoning him over. His head is pounding though, and he doesn't want to speak too much. But the boy is still drawing, and he wants to see the finished product.

"Will! Where'd you go? I haven't seen you in a hundred years!" One of the drawing girls say, and the new student looks up.

He panics.

The new boy is looking at him, and he wants to say something, but the girl asked him a question.

"Sick." He says, and walks behind the new boy, trying to get a seat beside him.

"Sick for a week and a half?" A shaven head boy says. A boy with too many missing teeth. Will nods, and tries to avoid looking at the new boy, simply because the new boy is looking at him.

"You any better?" The girl loudly says, and scratches her paper harshly with a red crayon. Ripping it, tearing it into two. The crayon gets onto the table, and he hears the new boy sigh.

"Yes, I am."

"What is your name?"

This. This was the new boy. He says the question with an accent, and his speech is almost slurring because of it.

Will finally looks at him. Finally looks at the boy's drawing, and he wants cry because of it.

"It's-" He tries to say, but it gets caught on his tongue.

"It's Will. We already said it!" The girl says, but the new boy doesn't pay any mind to her.

"beautiful."

"Your name?"

"Your drawing."

"Oh, thank you."

It's a dog. Black, fluffy. And it reminds him of Edward.

"My name is Will Graham." He says, smiling just slightly. And that was rare enough.

"What's yours?"

The new boy smiles back, and turns his drawing towards Will. "Hannibal Lector. You can keep it."

Will's face was enough to create a gigantic grin on Hannibal's own. His eyes popped, his cheeks reddened, and his smile was no longer slight.

"Really? I love it!"

He holds it up. And all the other children want to see it.

"It can't be that good." One of them says. "I think mine's better." Another one says.

All the voices break out of his concentration once Hannibal speaks up again.

"You are still sick, Will. You should be home."

Will sets the drawing down, and hears distant gasps in the background. "Yes. How did you know?"

"You smell like heat."

"Heat has a smell?"

"Everything has a smell, Will."

"You smell like cologne. My dad puts it on all the time. It sometimes gets onto me."

Hannibal smiles at that. "Is that bad or good?"

"It's good."

All the other drawing children have already lost interest in the two. They resorted into their own little bubbles. And for a moment, it was only Will and Hannibal in this classroom. At least, that's what it felt like. To Will. How all sound was blocked out the minute Hannibal spoke, the minute he heard a foreign accent.

Hannibal was different. And he's always craved that.

For the rest of the day, Will sat, stood, and laid beside Hannibal, and Hannibal never once minded. They watched each other, and spoke. Will's big blue innocent eyes were far too beautiful not to look at.

Hannibal had this way of speaking that soothed Will. While they sat in a corner, and spoke about the things they loved, Will could hardly speak for himself, all he wanted was Hannibal's voice in his mind, blocking out anything else.

Stars, he thought. A human sitting in front of him, and he can only think of the stars that resemble it. Resemble Hannibal. A quiet soul in this sea of noise.

"Are you an only child?" Hannibal asked, lowering his legs to lie flat on the ground.

Will glanced at his shoes, shiny and black. Then looked back at his own, torn and ragged. Brown and shades of the same ugly colour.

"Yeah..What about you?"

Hannibal wore a bow tie which Will had wanted to touch throughout the day. He stared at it. Thought about tugging it once, but he kept his hands down. Didn't want to risk making Hannibal angry.

"I have a little sister on the way."

Will stared and stared at the bow tie. A bit too much that he wasn't being discreet anymore.

"Will..I think you're getting better."

Then, Hannibal raised his hand to cup Will's forehead, feeling only warmth.

Will sat still, didn't move. Didn't even blink or try to breathe. He held his breath and felt Hannibal on his skin, warmth to warmth. Then he felt something strong inside him, something loud and beating. Something that's traveling throughout his body in pulses. *Right, my heart.*

"Oh, you are getting hot again."

"I- I'm fine." He finally managed to say, and reached up to grasp Hannibal's wrist. "I'm fine."

Will hadn't even remembered that he was sick. Hannibal was here, and he had forgotten, and everything was okay. His head was no longer aching, instead was entirely soothed. A straight line of calmness.

"You made me okay."

He wasn't supposed to say that. It was only in his mind, but his mouth moved and he turned even hotter. Redder. And Hannibal laughed at his reaction. How his lips quivered at the realization.

"I.."

"I'm glad to have made you okay, Will. I'm glad."

Chapter 2

Chapter Notes

This is really short, and feels like a drabble. Hopefully next one will be better.

(Please ignore my bad habit of using present and past tense at the same time)

It's been Tuesday for barely 7 hours. When his father gets up, feels the thirst in his throat, he finds a tiny thing laying atop of kitchen ground. A curly haired lost boy who has dog food stuck to cheek, and an overfilled tray on his left. He explained to his father about the whimpering at night. A crying dog resembling a creaking door, then clattering footsteps against the floorboard.

"I was waiting for him to come." Will says, half awake and half dissolving back into sleep.

His father wipes his face off, and gives him a look. "You gave him too much."

The room is lighting up, and the dancing shadows start to fade into a warm orange. It made Will more sleepy, made him want to close his eyes and fall into his fathers grip.

"He was hungry. And crying. I got up. I helped."

The only thing his father can do is smile and get him on his feet. Half of Wills face is cold from the floor, and the rest is still warm. Still not entirely recovered. "So, you used the kibble as a pillow." His father sighs. "Look Will, why don't you go back to bed. I'll make sure Edward gets his food."

"Yes, he's been loud."

"Mhm, I'm sure he has." His father cups his cheek, and tries to form a smile. But he stares at the clueless boy and all he can feel is sympathy.

Will turns, and starts to walk back to his bedroom. He staggers a bit on his feet but he stops and waits for the dizziness to pass. He looks so small, fragile. His bed wear was so ridiculously baggy that he had to cut off the bottom of his dragging trousers. A lousy uneven job that his father didn't comment on. They were cut above his ankles. Strings hung out of the fabric, and at times Will liked to pull on them while watching TV.

His father had waited for the sound of a closing door, and once it came, he grabbed the over filled dog tray, and tossed the food into the trash. After setting the tray back onto the ground, he grabbed a broom and began sweeping up the remains. He doesn't know how long this will go. How long Will will ask him about the dog, if he's fed, if he's been out for a walk. His father doesn't have the heart to explain. *You know he's dead, Will. Why are you playing?*

So when Will comes to him with a reminder of his dog, made out of cloud and air, he feeds it with no question, because a child can't face loss once it happens to the one thing that made him smile.

His father looks out the window, sees the rising sun, and wonders if there's anything left on Earth that can make Will happy again.

Noise. It's an invisible hand that likes to crawl up his head and clutch onto his hair. It likes to bite down onto his ears until he can scratch the unseeable force off him. It's all too terrible, and Will's all too helpless. He can do nothing but press his palms to his ears, and shake everything off. Hum a bothered tune until the noise is no longer. That's what he does, and no one asks. Except the action doesn't seem right to Hannibal. It's an unpleasant sight. A needy boy, needy for silence, but no one will quiet down and ask. *Are you okay? Are you okay?*

Will has his eyes closed at the corner of the class. Ears covered, knees up. He can feel a presence beside him, but he doesn't bother to look. It had only been 5 minutes. Hannibal returns to class after visiting the bathroom, and he frowns immediately at the sight. He thinks about touching Will on the shoulder to grab the shaking boy's attention, but that'll only worsen the problem. Too much sound, too much feedback. Hannibal can only think of sitting beside him.

Hannibal glances at the teacher for a moment, but he knows she won't help. Not more than he can.

"Will." He says, leaning against the wall. His eyes are cool and calm, and he only wants Will to look up. See. *Everything will be still, and straight, just look at me. Look at me.* "Will, please pay no mind to them." With humming, and pressed ears, it's impossible to hear Hannibal's voice beside him, filling the air with a strange accent. "Will." His hand is inches away from Will's brown sweater. Ready to tug on his arm. The sweater is riddled with black and white lint Hannibal had liked to pick off him. He would ask, and Will would nod and read *The Velveteen Rabbit* for the 16th time. A frequent book he brought from home.

"Please look." Hannibal has his hand up. Floating in nothing. He shouldn't touch him. He shouldn't. Should not. Should not. But it takes a few seconds after his last word, that Will opens his eyes, releases his forehead from his knees, and looks. And he sees. The foreign boy smiles gently, and notes the hands at either side of his head, still trying to block out the noise. "You looked." Hannibal says, and scoots himself an inch closer. Will's eyes are red, and tired. Discomforted. They travel to an object sitting on Hannibal's lap. A book painted purple and blue. On the cover, he can see flowers sprouting out, the reflection of the sun giving them a shine. The flowers were different shades of purple and what interests Will is the title. Not English, and not anything he knows. He won't be able to hear Hannibal if he asks, so he keeps quiet and stares.

"My favourite Lithuanian book." He says, aware that he is talking to himself. Hannibal opens the book and flips the pages until he is faced with the first chapter. He straightens it out and looks at Will.

Will looks at him.

He thinks about listening to Hannibal, thinks about removing his hands. But he can't get himself too.

"I am going to translate it into English. You can listen in whenever you please." He still hasn't begun. Buying time. "I know you like stories, Will. I hope this will help."

He waits just for a moment, hoping Will's arms will move down to his sides. But nothing. "Okay. I am starting."

Will sees his mouth move, sees his eyes sparkle at the words and his shoulders relax backwards into the chipping wall. *He's trying to help. He's trying to help.* So Will tries too. His hands, they twitch, undecidedly. He can still hear the kids laughing and screaming, but it's distant. And he feels distant towards Hannibal.

It hurts. *I am distant. I don't want that.*

His arms begin to move, his fingers start to tremble against his hair. He hears the scratching of it. How his nails brush against his scalp. Then dig into it. Now, it starts to rest and calm. And the pressure against his reddened ears now feel lighter than before. And the noises get louder. And louder. But he can hear Hannibal faintly above all that, and it strengthens him to let go completely.

His hands twitch towards his head once the rush of sound hits him, but he pushes through it. Hannibal is reading. *Listen to him. Listen to him.*

The invisible hands start surrounding him again, telling him to retreat. Reaching up his back, and around his ribs. Hannibal is reading. His voice; it's so calm Will wants to fall onto the ground. He doesn't feel like sitting himself up anymore, so he lays back and melts.

I'm listening.

Chapter 3

Chapter Notes

i am bad at continuously writing

He is young, and he has only felt so little things. Things that aren't strong and persistent in ones chest, things that go down with the sun. But he thinks that he is getting taller, and the beating he can hear ever so faintly is getting stronger. He taps his fathers arm, and tries to look big. "I've grown, right?" He asks and his father only folds his newspaper down, laughs and agrees.

He wants to say something else but he cant. He stands there, silent with eyes not at all sad. But..different. "Anything else, Will? Looks like you were gonna say something else." His heart is beating with the thought of someone. *The blood must travel. Must travel.* And he doesn't know what to do with all this feeling inside him. Should he reveal. "I made a friend. A new one."

His fathers face lightens up. "Oh, really? What's his name?"

Will loves his name, when he says it, when he thinks it. So with a big grin and happy eyes, he says. "Hannibal. He's from..uh..not here. He's new. He's the only nice one."

"Only nice one? I'm sure there are other nice kids in the classroom, Will."

Quick, he replies. "No, just him. Just Hannibal."

His father folds his legs and sighs with a smile. It's getting late, and Will seems giddy to go to bed for the next day. To see him, Hannibal, in the loud morning. But it's silenced at his face. And the only sound Will can hear is his blood, his heart. "Well, I'm glad for you, bud. Maybe one day he could come over if you'd like."

Will looks around, doesn't think his house is presentable enough. But he stills nods and smiles. "Yeah, maybe."

The lamp thats turned on at his right is not enough to light the entire room, and the warm colour gets him to yawn. The whole calmness of his environment, with brown furniture and soft fabrics. His fathers study. An occasional room where he's allowed to sit and roll cars around the carpet. Where he can pick certain books too advanced for his age. Will sometimes stares at the pages, not understanding a single printed word. And his father will laugh. "Are you even reading?"

Will looks up at his father. "Of course I am!" He says, face scrunched up, going back to the book to prove something.

While "reading" Will thinks of Hannibal, how he could read so perfectly. How he never paused or stopped or struggled at a word. How his voice sounded. Then he feels himself smiling, feels his face get hot and he doesn't quite realise how long a smile can last. When he assumes his normal expression, only then does he realise what he had been doing. Only then does he realise the pain, inside him, below his skin and perhaps even further. In his chest. And it feels somewhat like pain. Unpleasant. Bothering. *I don't like it, I don't like it, I don't like it.*

He's heard the word love before. He's said I love you. To Edward. To his father when It's time to close the lights and calm his head.

He's said it.

The feeling in his chest, is it the same?

Chapter 4

Chapter Summary

Ey another lil something (its been long ;d)

They both think of the pieces that they have become. Cracked shards that mend together once. once. once Hannibal has his self close to Will, and Will will try to hold his hand. But the wind is whistling for him not to. *You don't know how it'll make him feel. Maybe he doesn't want it. Want you.*

In the playground, where there is grass and sand and other children speaking, Will watches Hannibal play with the bugs beneath the plants and bushes, he watches him hold beetles and spiders. "Aren't you afraid?" Will asks from a slight distance, wary of coming in too close.

Hannibal has calm eyes. The beetle runs across the back of his palm, it races to move itself to a different place but Hannibal turns his hand so that it may never leave its designated area. "No. Want to hold it?"

Will looks down at him crouched next to the dirt, he shakes his head and thinks *ah, you are brave, and I am not.*

"Alright. There is nothing to be scared of. It's only a moving thing."

Will blinks. "It's creepy."

"It is safe."

Everything around them appears grey, and thats when Will looks up and notices the sun hiding, a shy thing like himself, not wanting to beam out. And of course nothing can get his heart to beat like this, when there's a certain atmosphere floating through the air. When Hannibal is close to him, focused and undisturbed and the only thing he can think of is, *how did we find each other in this mess of a world.*

Will watches him release the beetle back into the dirt, he watches him stand, he watches him smile.

Beat.

"We are standing in a darker place."

Beat. Hannibal has this special smile he's never seen on anyone else. Something worthy of hurt.

"Is it- going to rain?"

"I hope so."

"I'm scared of water."

Hannibal has his eyes fixed on Will, like this little boy might vanish into sand if otherwise, like this small creature might change in an instant because the world seems to be moving faster ever since they met.

fast and strong, fast and strong.

Hannibal extends his hand. A simple gesture carrying a million things.

"I'm here so theres nothing to be afraid of."

The Earth is grey.

They both think, *that doesn't matter. We are made up of color and nothing else.*

Will takes his hand.

his heart.

Beat. Beat. Beating. For an angel.

Except, except Will didn't notice when. when.

when Hannibal crushed the beetle, and ruined the spiders home.

Chapter 5

Do you? Do I? Do you? Should I?

Will is staring at him in different ways. Sleepy, tired, in awe. In. In.

Love has been appearing in his mind, that word written in pink like how it's displayed in most places. Paper hearts glued onto the walls. He saw a girl give one to a boy and he thought it was a smart thing. The teacher helped her cut it out, helped her draw a flower inside. The teacher watched as the little girl with broken teeth gave away her paper heart to the boy, and the boy took it and ripped it apart.

He got time out. Sat in a corner and cried.

Now Will is watching Hannibal try and complete his puzzle scattered on the floor and he doesn't know what word he needs to use. He has a limited mind. He knows that. He doesn't know enough words to explain everything. He thinks about giving Hannibal the same pink paper heart but what if it'll end up in the trash. Not the same way though. He knows Hannibal is too kind to rip it apart. Maybe just..not accept it.

Will, only boys and girls do this.

That is all Will sees. Boys and girls. On TV, he saw a man in bed with a women and his father didn't bother to turn it off, so he just sat and watched this unfamiler thing. His father did comment. He lazily pointed to the action, eyes to a book, so very bored. *Will, that's..that's how babies are made, how you were.* It doesn't take much for Will to think so intensely about certain things. He once had his mind stuck on an image. Tall dry grass swaying in the wind. It replayed on and on and he didn't want to talk much while it did. He just wanted to think about it. He thinks about that man and women. He wonders if they were in love, because when you're in love you want to be so very close to the person, *don't you?*

At school, at home. Every day. He wants to be close to Hannibal. He wants to hold his hand and lay his head on his shoulder. But a paper flower or heart, anything to confess, anything showing, Will thinks all that is entirely stupid now. Love should be a mutual understanding of each others minds. He doesn't need to confess. Hannibal should know. If Hannibal knew him, then he should know. *Hannibal. You should know.*

He supposes it's unfair to think that everyone can read your mind. He certainly knows that's not the case. All those teachers. His father. Always getting him wrong. His kicking legs and swaying arms, a child tantrum they say, another annoying child. They don't understand that there's just too many things on him. On his body. If someone could just..get them off...If someone could just understand. *Oh, wait.* In class, he's smiling so very very very wide and he catches himself at it, he catches his surroundings. Back on Earth. He's stopped thinking. He's

realized. Some of the children stare at him weird but he doesn't care. He's sitting on a chair, watching his love. His love. And he smiles because he finally realizes. Finally. Someone does understand him.

"Hannibal."

His puzzle is finished. Will gets up from his chair and walks over to Hannibal who looks up at him, lights caught in his eyes. "It looks really nice."

"Thank you."

"What is it?" Will can't get his face to calm down. He's red. He knows it. He's also so tired of trying to keep all his love inside.

"It's an old building. Look how it's broken."

Will doesn't take his eyes off Hannibal.

"Will."

"Yes."

"You're different. You look happy."

Will could say it now. He could. Hannibal is looking at him and he's looking back and Hannibal would probably be the only person in the world to ever understand him. Truly. He could say it. The words. It's simple. But Will still isn't sure of Hannibal's reply. This makes him so frustrated. He shouldn't feel this. It's too much. It's too complicated. He's still so little. Maybe, if he told Hannibal, then Hannibal could help. He's so much more helpful than any adult Will has come across. He's so much more-

"Hannibal, I-"

"Do you know where that boy is?"

"..wha-...What boy?"

"The boy with a grey shaved head."

"..No-"

"He's not here today. Do you want to know where he is?"

Will is muddled. He was ready. He was going to say it but what comes at him is..strange? A question he never thought of. Words coming out of Hannibal's mouth that he didn't expect. Now...*Do you want to know where he is?*

"I...not really. He isn't my friend."

"I know. But, you're not wondering?"

It almost makes him mad why he isn't understanding this conversation. But Hannibal notices this and smiles.

"Okay, you aren't. It's alright.

"I want to know."

"Will, It's okay."

"Tell me."

"Well...alright...yesterday he got picked up by the ambulance."

"Why?"

"...because he was injured-"

"Who injured him?"

Hannibal smiles. He gently pats Wills head.

"Now you want to know everything." He laughs.

Just a simple touch makes Will lose every thought inside him. He almost forgets where he is until someone starts crying in the distance, until Hannibal messes up the puzzle and says through the noise.

"Me." Big, yet quiet smile.

"What?"

"I did."

"..What?"

"He threw dirt at you. Remember?"

"How...how did you hurt him?" Wills nose and eyes crinkle into confusion and things, words, sentences, caught thoughts that will never reach the air, they fly over him, around him, inside him. Hannibal got revenge. Is that what it is? Kind Hannibal. His friend Hannibal. He should've just thrown dirt back but Will looks around. The boy isn't here. And the teacher..she's been acting weird. Her eyes are red and all she does is sit solemnly at her desk. Not moving.

"After school, I put a pencil in his eye."

"A pencil?! Did the teacher see you?"

"You know they are bad. She had other places to go."

"You did it because he threw dirt at me?"

"Yes."

"Is he in the hospital?"

"I would guess so. Will, you dont look happy anymore."

"Hannibal..thats a..I didnt think you would do that. That's a big thing. You could've killed him. I dont understand..."

"I wont let anyone upset you, Will. He will not do anything to you anymore."

"Hannibal..wh-"

"I love you, Will."

Will thinks a lot about useless things. The tall grass swaying below sky, open and bright. He never remembered it so clearly as he did now. Because he seems to be in it. With Hannibal. With Hannibal, he's with Hannibal sitting in this field and a plane flies, yells over them. He feels the loudness in the air, the vibrations left to sink into him. The birds that follow after and the hum of hidden summer insects. The wind pushes his hair with humanlike gentleness. And the sun lays onto them both. And Hannibal. And Hannibal. And Hannibal has just told Will that he loves him. The grass shifts.

"I love you too."

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